

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 BIB-01

OMB-01 SAM-01 NIC-01 SAJ-01 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00

/069 W

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R 071429Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7701

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L 0486

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, CZ

SUBJECT: HUSAK MOSCOW VISIT

REF: PRAGUE 460, 445

1. PURPOSES OF HUSAK'S MARCH 3 TRIP TO MOSCOW REMAIN HIDDEN, DESPITE AGITATED QUESTIONING BY DIPLOMATS AND JOURNALISTS. LOCAL AP REPRESENTATIVE TOLD US SHE WAS INFORMED BY TASS MAN ABOUT TRIP TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE, AND FILED STORY ON IT WHICH WAS NOT USED ON THE WIRE. THIS TENDS TO SUBSTANTIATE IDEA THAT TRIP HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH ANY PRESENT CRISIS.

2. SAME SOURCE HAD ALSO BEEN TOLD THAT THIS WAS TO BE FIRST OF SERIES OF VISITS BY PARTY FIRST SECRETARIES TO MOSCOW TO MEET WITH BREZHNEV. SOME DIPLOMATS HERE HAVE SPECULATED, IN THIS CONNECTION, THAT HIGHLY VISIBLE VISIT BY HUSAK WAS PRIMARILY INTENDED AS PART OF BREZHNEV'S RE-EMERGENCE INTO ACTIVE
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POLITICS AFTER HIS RECENT ABSENCE.

3. EVERYONE ON THE GOSSIP CIRCUIT HERE TENDS TO ACCEPT THE IDEA NOW THAT HUSAK'S VISIT WAS NOT CONNECTED IN ANY DIRECT WAY WITH THE MARCH 4-5 PRAGUE MEETING OF PARTY SECRETARIES FROM EE, CUBA AND MONGOLIA, WHICH REPORTEDLY DEALT WITH PROPAGANDA AND IDEALOGY. SINCE PRICE RISES AND ECONOMIC WOES ARE ON EVERYBODY'S MINDS, MAJORITY OF OBSERVERS THINK HUSAK'S TRIP MIGHT HAVE BEEN IN THAT CONTEXT. SOME KNOWLEDGEABLE FOLK, LIKE THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR, SAY THIS IS UNLIKELY BECAUSE HUSAK WENT ALONE WITHOUT EXPERTS, THUS IMPLYING A DISCUSSION OF HIGH-LEVEL LEADERSHIP-TYPE MATTERS. BRITISH AMBASSADOR, WHO ACKNOWLEDGES HE IS WORKING WITHOUT ANY FACTS, DOUBTS THAT TRIP WAS MEANT TO IRON OUT WRINKLED ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. RATHER HE SUSPECTS THE IRONING OUT OF THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IS CAUSING SEVERE STRAIN WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP HERE, AND PERHAPS HUSAK (WHO REPUTEDLY ENJOYS BREZHNEV'S PERSONAL SUPPORT) WENT TO MOSCOW TO GET BREZHNEV'S BACKING IN THE ONGOING POLICY DISPUTES. THIS STRIKES US AS LOGICAL, UNTIL SOME FACTS COME ALONG TO IMPROVE ON IT.

DUTCH DELEGATION IS NOW IN TOWN FOR BILATERAL TALKS, AND FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK HAS CALLED A CONFERENCE OF AMBASSADORS WHICH IS NOW GOING ON, BUT DESPITE THE OPENINGS FOR QUESTIONING THESE EVENTS CEATE, NONE OF THE CZECHS HAS ANYTHING HELPFUL TO SAY ABOUT THE HUSAK VISIT. THEREFORE THE SEARCH CONTINUES.

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